

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) Semi-finished product for making plug-in contacts in plug-in connectors for electric DC power systems in motor vehicles which are operated at a nominal voltage at which electric arcing may occur, having an electrically conductive main body made of a non-precious metallic material that carries, at least in part, a contact-making coating of a material more precious than the material of the main body, wherein the coating has a thickness of at least 0.3 μm and consists of silver or of a silver-based alloy with an addition that will not form an alloy with silver or with the silver-based alloy, or will at best form a precipitation alloy, and which has a higher melting point than silver, the non-alloyed addition being tungsten or molybdenum in an amount of between 0.5 % - 15 % by weight, a diffusion inhibiting intermediate layer disposed between the main body and the contact making coating, the coating having a thickness of 0.5 μm to 5 μm .
2. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating has a thickness of maximally 10 μm .
3. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating has a thickness of maximally 5 μm .
4. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating has a thickness of 0.5 μm to 4 μm .
5. (Currently amended) Semi-finished product for making plug-in contacts in plug-in connectors for electric DC power systems in motor vehicles which are operated at a nominal voltage at which electric arcing may occur, having an electrically conductive main body made of a non-precious metallic material that carries, at least in part, a contact-making coating of a material more precious than the material of the main body, wherein the coating

has a thickness of at least 0.3 μm and consists of silver or of a silver-based alloy with an addition that will not form an alloy with silver or with the silver-based alloy, or will at best form a precipitation alloy, and which has a higher melting point than silver, the non-alloyed addition being tungsten or molybdenum in an amount of at least 0.2 percent by weight, a diffusion inhibiting intermediate layer disposed between the main body and the contact making coating, the coating having a thickness of 0.5 μm to 5 μm The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of at least 0.2 percent by weight.

6. (Canceled) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the non-alloyed addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of at least 0.5 percent by weight.

7. (Currently amended) Semi-finished product for making plug-in contacts in plug-in connectors for electric DC power systems in motor vehicles which are operated at a nominal voltage at which electric arcing may occur, having an electrically conductive main body made of a non-precious metallic material that carries, at least in part, a contact-making coating of a material more precious than the material of the main body, wherein the coating has a thickness of at least 0.3 μm and consists of silver or of a silver-based alloy with an addition that will not form an alloy with silver or with the silver-based alloy, or will at best form a precipitation alloy, and which has a higher melting point than silver, the non-alloyed addition being tungsten or molybdenum in an amount of maximally 50 percent by weight, a diffusion inhibiting intermediate layer disposed between the main body and the contact making coating, the coating having a thickness of 0.5 μm to 5 μm The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of at least 0.2 percent by weight.

8. (Currently amended) Semi-finished product for making plug-in contacts in plug-in connectors for electric DC power systems in motor vehicles which are operated at a nominal voltage at which electric arcing may occur, having an electrically conductive main body made of a non-precious metallic material that carries, at least in part, a contact-making coating of a material more precious than the material of the main body, wherein the coating has a thickness of at least 0.3 μm and consists of silver or of a silver-based alloy with an addition that will not form an alloy with silver or with the silver-based alloy, or will at best form a precipitation alloy, and which has a higher melting point than silver, the non-alloyed addition being tungsten or molybdenum in an amount of maximally 30 percent by weight, a diffusion inhibiting intermediate layer disposed between the main body and the contact making coating, the coating having a thickness of 0.5 μm to 5 μm ~~The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of maximally 30 percent by weight.~~

9. (Canceled) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the addition is contained in the silver or in the silver-based alloy in an amount of maximally 15 percent by weight.

10. (Currently amended)

Semi-finished product for making plug-in contacts in plug-in connectors for electric DC power systems in motor vehicles which are operated at a nominal voltage at which electric arcing may occur, having an electrically conductive main body made of a non-precious metallic material that carries, at least in part, a contact-making coating of a material more precious than the material of the main body, wherein the coating has a thickness of at least 0.3 μm and consists of silver or of a silver-based alloy with an addition that will not form an alloy with silver or with the silver-based alloy, or will at best form a precipitation alloy, and which has a higher melting point than silver, the non-alloyed addition being one or more

substances taken from the group of the following substances: Tungsten, molybdenum, graphite, nickel, cobalt and metal oxides, tin oxide, zinc oxide, tungsten carbide and molybdenum carbide, in an amount of between 0.5 % - 15 % by weight, a diffusion inhibiting intermediate layer disposed between the main body and the contact making coating, the coating having a thickness of 0.5 µm to 5 µm.

The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the addition comprises one or more substances taken from the group of the following substances: Tungsten, molybdenum, graphite, nickel, cobalt and metal oxides, tin oxide, zinc oxide, tungsten carbide and molybdenum carbide.

11. (Currently amended) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating is deposited by a sputtering PVD process, especially by sputtering.

12. (Currently amended) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein a material from the following group is selected as material for the main body:

(a) CuNiSi(X): Materials designated C7025, C7026 according to CDA, (b) CuFeP: Materials designated C194, C19210 according to CDA, (c) CuSn: Materials designated C521, C511, C14415, according to CDA, (d) CuZn: Materials designated C272, C230, C260 according to CDA, (e) CuCrSiTi(X): Materials designated C18070, C18080, C18090 according to CDA, for example,

(f) CuNiSn: Materials designated C72500, C19025 according to CDA,

(g) CuSnZn: Materials designated C663, C425 according to CDA,

(h) CuNiZn: Materials designated C75700, C77000, C76400 according to CDA,

(i) CuBe: Materials designated C17100, C17410, C17200 according to CDA,

(j) CuTi: Materials from the family of materials designated C19900 according to CDA, (k) Stainless steel: Materials designated

1.4310 according to DIN 17224,

1.4311 according to DIN 17440,

1.4406 according to DIN 17440,

1.4428 according to DIN 17443,

1.4429 according to DIN 17440,

1.4568 according to DIN 17224,

1.4841 according to DIN 17224,

1.4318, 1.1231, 1.1248, 1.1269, 1.1274, 1.5029 according to DIN V 17006-100.

13. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the product is a strip.

14. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 13, wherein the strip is pre-punched.

15. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating consists of silver with a tungsten or molybdenum content of 4 to 6% by volume, and is applied in a thickness of 0.5 μm to 5 μm .

16. (Canceled) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein a diffusion-inhibiting intermediate layer is provided between the main body and the contact-making coating.

17. (Previously presented) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 16, wherein the intermediate layer consists of silver or nickel.

18. (Currently amended) The semi-finished product as defined in claim 1, wherein the concentration of the non-alloyed addition in the silver or silver-alloy coating is lower at the surface of the coating than in the deeper region of the coating.

19. (Previously presented) Plug-in contacts for electric plug-in connectors made from a semi-finished product according to claim 1.

20. (Withdrawn) The use of plug-in contacts as defined in Claim 19 in electric power systems of automobiles, which are operated at a nominal voltage at which arcing may occur, especially in 42 Volt DC power systems.
21. (Withdrawn) Method for making a semi-finished product as defined claim 1 by PVD coating of a strip, consisting of a non-precious metallic material, with silver or a silver-based alloy with an addition, which has a higher melting point than silver and which does not form an alloy, or at best a separation alloy, with the silver or the silver-based alloy.
22. (Withdrawn) The method as defined in Claim 21, wherein coating is effected by sputtering.
23. (Withdrawn) The method as defined in Claim 21, wherein the components of the coating are deposited simultaneous or in a fashion overlapping in time.
24. (Withdrawn) The method as defined in Claim 23, wherein ratio of the separation rates of the components of the coating is altered during the separation process.
25. (Withdrawn) The method as defined in Claim 24, wherein the ratio between the separation rate of the addition and the separation rate of the silver or the silver alloy is reduced toward the end of the separation process.